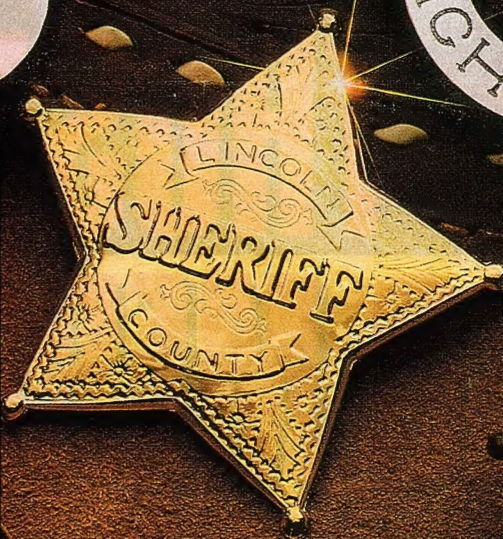


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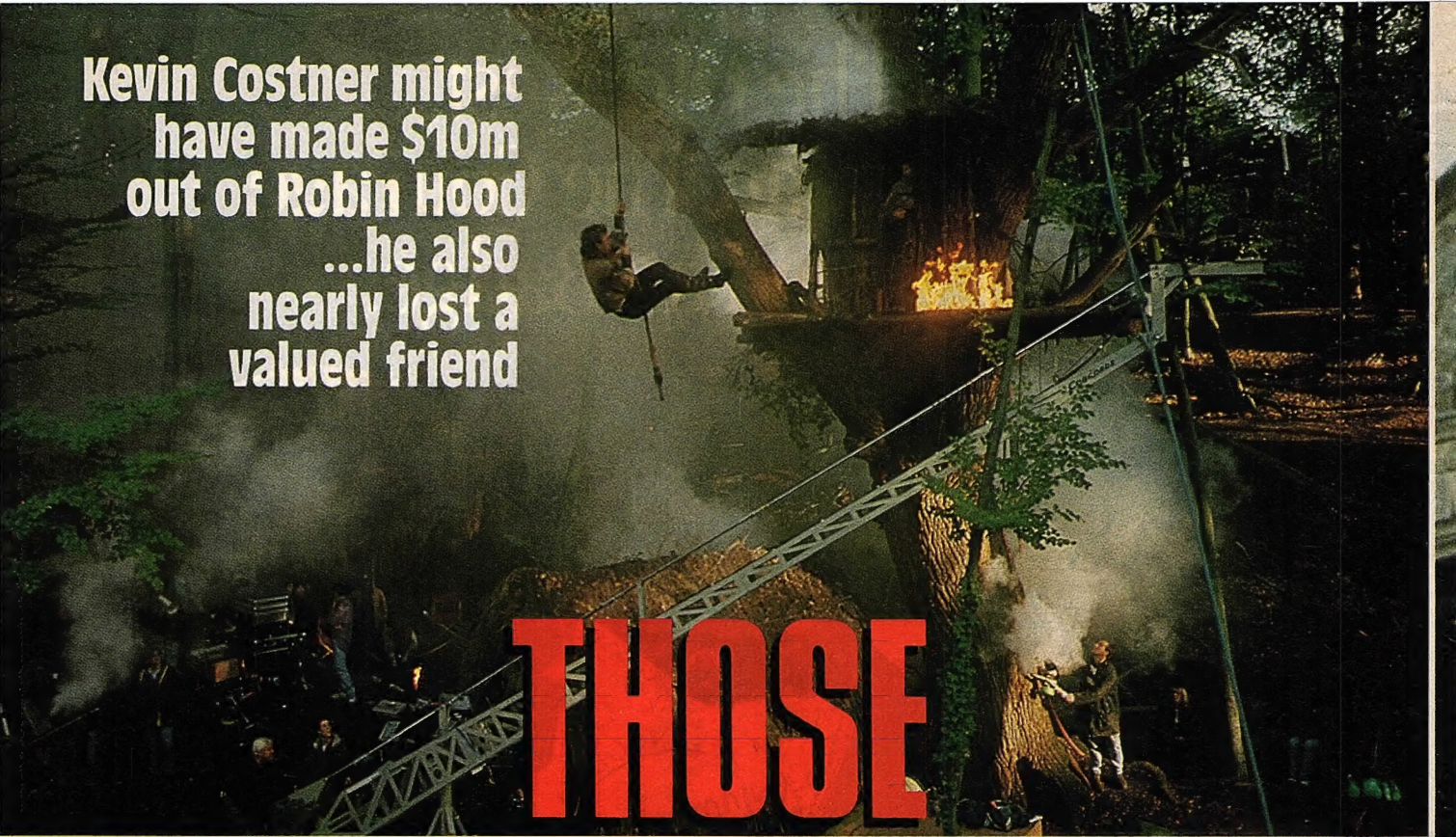
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**Kevin Costner might
have made \$10m
out of Robin Hood
...he also
nearly lost a
valued friend**

THOSE NOT SO MERRY MEN!

DANCES WITH WOLVES star Kevin Costner and his long-time buddy, director Kevin Reynolds, jumped at the chance to make *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves*.

They realised there would be problems with the massive, \$65 million costume drama, but neither suspected it could destroy their friendship and damage their careers.

The central problem was the shooting schedule — cut from 15 weeks to 10 by producers Morgan Creek Productions, which wanted to vanquish competing *Robin Hood* projects at 20th Century-Fox and Tri-Star.

"It was like some kind of horse race," Costner says.

One factor pushed Costner to set aside his reservations, and it wasn't his \$10 million fee.

"The biggest choice for me was Kevin (Reynolds)," he says. "It seemed irresistible — to go to England, to be with my friend."

Reynolds debuted as a Steven Spielberg protege in 1985 with *Fandango*, featuring Costner in his first starring role.

South-western boys with middle-class values and obsessions with movies and frontier mythology, Costner and Reynolds remained friends after *Fandango*, evolving an amusingly competitive kinship.

"If we see two crows on a wire, we'll bet to see which one flies first," says Costner.

When Costner felt overwhelmed out there on the South Dakota prairie, it was Reynolds who

showed up for two weeks to shoot second unit on *Dances With Wolves*.

So when Morgan Creek asked Reynolds to direct *Robin Hood*, Costner was locked into the project. "With all the problems I knew the movie was gonna have," Costner says, "with the speed, I felt that he was the best guy for it. I thought the movie was great fun, and in Kevin's hands I thought it could be great fun and we would get my thing exactly right."

As filming began, Costner and Reynolds dedicated themselves to creating a bracing new *Robin Hood*.

While the director intentionally avoided watching the 1938 Errol Flynn classic, Costner rented it before he came to England — to see what he was up against.

"I thought Errol was terrific but, you know, it's pretty hokey. I think his costume even had sequins on it," he says, laughing.

Errol Flynn never cracked a sweat or got his tights dirty but, in 1991, Robin needed more realism. Reynolds pushed Costner to portray some explicit agony.

"This is an emotional *Robin Hood*," Costner says. "He doesn't go through this whole movie with a twinkle in his eye, and that may disappoint. He goes through the loss of his father, and there's an emotional release with his caretaker, who raised him. Then he finds out he has a stepbrother. So this is a Robin who doesn't have all the answers, you know?"



MAIN PICTURE:
Kevin Costner
... "Some kind
of horse race."
RIGHT: Director
Kevin Reynolds
... "I don't feel
you trust me."
TOP LEFT:
Behind the
scenes ... it
was the
accent, not
the action,
that worried
Costner.

However, the initial enthusiasm was soon dampened and, by and large, Robin and his men were hardly merry.

The film-makers endured more than their share of production horrors because of skimpy preparation time, lousy weather and a clear case of too many cooks — the show had seven credited producers.

"What I hated was the fact that you knew from the first week you were behind schedule, because the schedule wasn't realistic," Reynolds says.

Before long Reynolds and Costner began to feel the pressure.

The story of the making of Robin Hood is a case study in what can happen when friendship and creative collaboration intersect with a \$65 million investment and the whole enterprise is thrown into the Hollywood pressure cooker.

"We were like little boys in a world that gets very big," Costner says.

"And I think the task at hand was something we never bargained for, that put us at opposite ends sometimes."

Costner and Reynolds were in total agreement on the essential problem: the breakneck pace was killing them. But they parted ways on what to do about it.

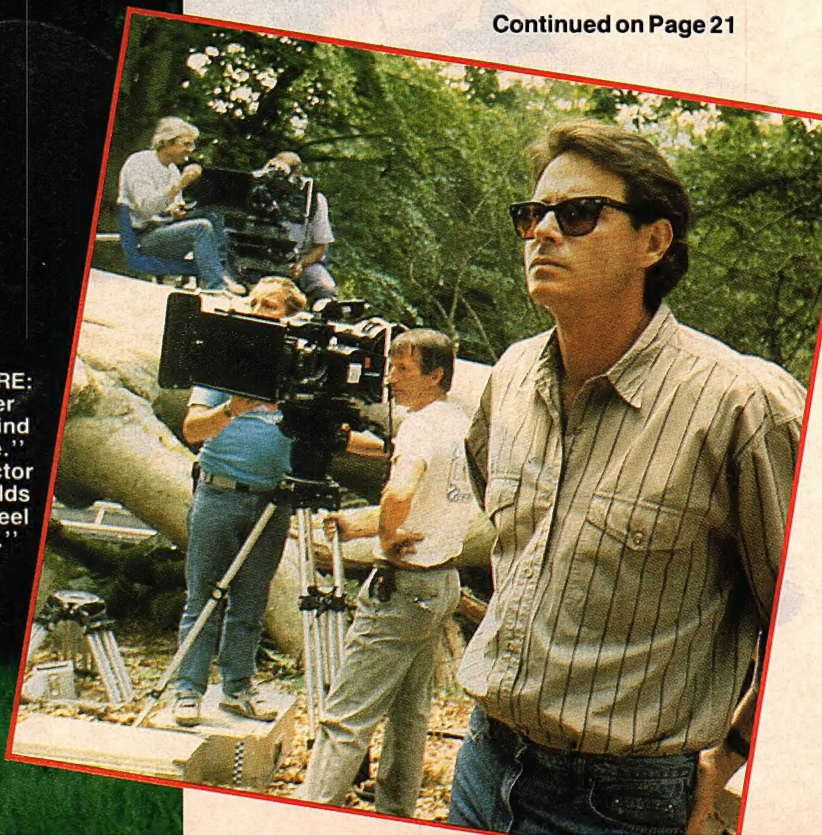
"When a movie gets going, it's like a locomotive," says Costner. The star wanted to stop the train, but the director wanted to hang on for dear life.

"That's what happens when you're directing," says Costner, "when you've got a lot of people on you. He felt it was better to go forward; I felt that put the project at risk."

Costner's main grievance was that the schedule robbed the actors of rehearsal time and didn't allow for crucial script refinements that he had insisted on from the outset. Two months before Reynolds was brought on to the project, Costner "passed on it, because I thought Robin Hood wasn't fully realised".

"You have to know, too, that I've worked

Continued on Page 21



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THOSE NOT SO MERRY MEN!

Continued from Page 19

on about six movies where I never changed a line," Costner says. "So it's not a phobia."

What caused Costner most distress was being denied the chance to master an English accent.

He didn't want to deliver lines such as: "Come, my strange friend, beyond that hill lies the prettiest little castle in all Christendom!" in an Oklahoma drawl — not in the company of the Royal Shakespeare Company-trained costars Alan Rickman, and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, whose classical experience made it easy for her to slip into standard English. He bitterly resented the dismissal of his dialect coach by the producers.

"Given the speed the three Robin Hoods were going, and that I said I would do this one, I didn't expect to be treated like that, exactly," Costner says.

Reynolds says, diplomatically: "What we found was that in some scenes the accent worked better than in others. And I'd say, 'Maybe we shouldn't try this, and you should use a natural kind of voice,' which was frustrating for him. My concern was that you don't want to see something up on the screen that pulls you out of the movie."

Morgan Creek boss James Robinson, who was not always a welcome presence on the set, is far more blunt. "Kevin could not focus on the English accent and act — he wasn't Kevin Costner," he says. "He was trying to do the English accent, and it was ruining his performance. He's the kind of guy where it has to flow. I said, 'Have Kevin play Kevin Costner — we'll fix it on the dubbing stage.' I'm the one who said, 'Enough of this.'"

At one stage during the shoot Costner and Reynolds had dinner together. Costner says he looked at his friend across the table and said: "I think there are real problems with this movie. And this accent stuff is gonna be a problem, because I don't have your confidence. I don't feel like you trust me, Kev." And Reynolds replied: "Well, I don't feel like you trust me."

Why didn't Costner use his position to slow the production down?

He says he kept expecting things to get better. "What I thought was that the good argument would carry the day, which is — we've got to stop. And I thought that Kevin



“We were like little boys in a world that gets very big . . . the task at hand was something we never bargained for”

had enough clout to say, 'We've got to make that room,' with my endorsement. But that never happened. That bubble of creative safety, which to me means everybody knows what they're doing, never created itself."

Things got so bad that Costner even contemplated shutting down the production.

But he says: "Throwing my weight around looked ugly to me; I just didn't like the scenario of it."

He doesn't want to sound like a whiner. "You almost don't want to come out and talk," he says, "because it's like a wimp kind of thing: 'I didn't get to rehearse.' But that's where your feet get planted firmly on the ground."

While another director and star might have had a dust-up and

stopped talking to each other, Costner and Reynolds persevered together, at times uneasily, through the final scenes. Costner says Reynolds would often turn to him and say, "'Was it this hard on Dances?' all the time, you know, and I said no, and he goes, 'God.' He goes, 'I don't . . . ' You know what I mean? So you had to empathise with him."

Reynolds was at the same time suffering through the demise of a love affair, "and I didn't feel like I wanted to add to his woes".

Having so recently occupied the director's chair himself, Costner could see that Reynolds was doing the best he could in a bad situation. "I think he did a remarkable job, given the circumstances." Costner is adamant that Reynolds is not to blame for what went awry on Robin Hood. "I'm talking about an *environment* that I thought was wrong . . . And it's up to the producing entity to help create a good professional environment."

Reynolds, for his part, says he hated asking the actors to forgo rehearsal time but felt

that, given the \$65 million gorilla on his back, he couldn't do otherwise. He acknowledges that Costner "was really shattered, you know. Directing a picture just drains you completely. And it was tough on him to try to assume the character of Robin and sort of evolve in the course of shooting and all. So, yeah, it was really tough on everybody".

Although one might guess that Costner's success as a director would make it difficult for him to relinquish authority, both he and Reynolds says the opposite was true. After *Dances*, Costner was relieved to be an actor for hire again. "He knows what it's like to be on the other side of the camera," says Reynolds, "and that was an enormous help — he was really easy to work with. I'm sure it was very frustrating for him, because of the way we had to shoot the picture. If it had been anybody else, there would have been a lot more conflict. I know he had to bite his lip sometimes."

From Nancy Griffin in Los Angeles

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STW/30/91

Who's TV latest kids' show host?

A Daddo, naturally!

WHEN Cameron and Andrew Daddo were told their youngest brother Lochie was following their footsteps they were overjoyed.

Lochie, who hosts Network Ten's new Saturday and Sunday cartoon show Kids' Stuff from this week, received some good advice from his more experienced brothers. Both Cameron and Andrew started hosting children's shows. Cameron did Off The Dish, while Andrew and Alex Papps co-hosted The Factory.

"They were really pleased for me," Lochie

says. "It was like, 'Do it, mate, do it'. Basically they just said to do the best you can and you'll be all right. They told me to just be natural."

At 21, Lochie has already had a taste of television. He hosted the now-defunct Countdown Revolution last year and has been looking at other television roles and taking acting classes.

"I'll just have as much fun as I can," Lochie says. "I relate well to kids. I'm really a kid at heart ... about a five-year-old."

His brothers' success hasn't daunted Lochie.

"I know people are going to look at me as another Daddo. It's just one of those things I have to put up with. But I don't mind being another Daddo. There's more to it than that."

"It's easier now (than when he first started) because I have a name for myself and it's not like I'm running on Cam and Andrew's name."

Story:
Andrew Shipp
Picture:
Ray Messner

